

# California State Journal of Medicine

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Contributors, subscribers and readers will find important information on the sixteenth advertising page following the reading matter.

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## LOCATIONS FOR DOCTORS

The physicians of California who have been in service are rapidly returning to their homes. Many of them are seeking new locations. A general shaking-up of locations is in progress. There are many opportunities for practice in the smaller towns and rural sections, especially, and there are many places where physicians are urgently needed. It is requested that every person knowing of any such need or opportunity for practice will communicate with the office of the State Medical Society, as this office is in a position to place many doctors throughout the State if only local needs can be recognized. It is a matter of service to these communities and also of service to the returning physicians who wish to lose no time in re-establishing themselves. It is the desire of this office to serve both. Will you assist?

## THE BOY SCOUTS' OATH

The Boy Scout promises on his honor

1. To do my duty to God and my country, and to obey the Scout Law,
2. To help other people at all times,
3. To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

How is that for a program for the average busy physician? This latter has all too little time to consider questions of morals and ethics. He is not prone from experience or training to dip into the vagaries of theological theories. He may never have had the opportunity in school and college to formulate for himself some sort of rational explanation for the existence of things. He has a strong consciousness that he *ought* to do certain things and often feels the need of some one to tell him where the *ought* really lies. In other words, in

the busy hurry of men and affairs, in the press of urgencies inherent in the life of every physician, there is no time for more than running orders of the briefest and most practical nature when it comes to the question of a daily ethical and moral program. Try the Scouts' oath. It ought to fit the average doctor pretty well and make him a good scout if not a Boy Scout.

## LINES OF EFFECTIVE PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

According to the summary of mortality statistics for 1917 by the Census Bureau, twenty-seven states, forty-three cities additional, and the District of Columbia, containing all told, 73 per cent. of the population of the United States, now comprise the registration area of the United States. Over a third of the recorded deaths in this area were due to cardio-renal disease, apoplexy, cancer, enteritis, influenza, diabetes, diphtheria and bronchitis. Here is a group of diseases on which preventive medicine should concentrate. Epidemic diseases with known or unknown bacterial causes are rapidly being rendered controllable.

A recent measure (Harding-Fess bill) introduced into Congress calls for the expenditure under the Federal Public Health Service of five million dollars in the investigation "of influenza and allied diseases in order to determine their cause and methods of prevention." This bill should pass without delay. There is reason for expecting a recrudescence of influenza this coming winter. This sum is paltry indeed, compared to the loss in life and money from another epidemic.

The other diseases in this list should share in special attention from investigators, both clinical and laboratory. When medical science has determined disease causes, the way is open for their complete eradication. Not only should popular interest

be centered on right living for health, but it must of necessity devote sufficient attention to eradication of known disease causes and control of disease carriers.

### NEW YORK PHYSICIANS TO FORM UNION.

The news columns from time to time have contained startling statements of the plans and performances of New York physicians, but the most astounding statement was contained in the following press despatch under date of August 13th:

"Hugh Frayne, labor organizer, said he had been asked to organize a physicians' union to affiliate with the American Federation of Labor."

We have watched with growing concern and fraternal interest the fruitless experiments which some of our New York brethren have been making with ineffectual makeshift machinery in their commendable efforts to ward off impending dangers to the profession.

The medical profession in some localities has apparently become so accustomed to being exploited that it has developed extraordinary tolerance for encroachment. Due to lack of preparedness and organization it has become a passive profession. We have long wondered how long and far the New York profession would retreat until it felt forced to say, "thus far and no further."

But if the press despatch above quoted represents its remedy, we predict that "it has o'erleaped itself and fallen on the other side." An affiliation with the American Federation of Labor or any other entangling alliance with any organization or association whose purposes cannot coincide with the ideals of the medical profession will not solve the difficulties that confront or the dangers that encompass the medical profession in New York and elsewhere.

The broad powers of membership control and the potent measures of enforcing their rules, which the union finds necessary, could not be applied to or observed by the medical profession without sacrificing the essential character of our profession. The doctor cannot be master of his time or have his time mastered. It belongs to the community that he serves. We can start or stop the soulless things of metal in harmony with the whistle's blast. The hours of the artisan and mechanic can and should be well regulated. Their work can be figured with mathematical accuracy. But the work of the doctor is contingent upon the ills that flesh is heir to that come and go during life's uncertain voyage. The milk of human kindness, that is always administered by the true doctor, cannot be measured or restricted by hours, molds, schedules and other mass regulations.

When the doctor ceases to be the good Samaritan and attempts to measure the time during which he will bind up the wounds of the world, he will forfeit golden public opinion and the sacred trust which all sorts of people now place in him. "If the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men."

Once you limit the spirit of sacrifice, you sacri-

fice the spirit which makes the profession noble. The medical profession is not a trade and cannot be regulated as trades are. The devoted duty of the doctor to the patient cannot be abridged or subordinated without injury to the public.

The imperative need for organization to save the family heirlooms from political burglars has been pointed out and urged by the keen-sighted men of the medical profession for years. Here in California the medical profession has not only recognized and discussed the need of organization but it has formed one. Earnest men and women have leagued together and are serving the public as well as the profession through an independent non-partisan, non-commercial organization—The League for the Conservation of Public Health. The League is now in its second year of fruitful endeavor, and it has enlisted the enthusiastic interest and active support of the best medical talent and provided the means and machinery through which it may speak and act most effectively in concert.

The medical profession of this state is in fullest harmony with the worthy aspirations of union labor as exemplified by its representative leaders here in California. Modern medicine has brought to industry a link that has been missing between labor and capital. Neither labor nor capital can have more disinterested friends than the devoted doctors, for medical science confers its benefits impartially on all. The medical profession must remain independent of the organizations of labor and capital in order to render this impartial service for the betterment of both.

New York and other states need an independent co-operating organization like our League for the Conservation of Public Health.

### SYPHILIS MUST GO.

According to the American Social Hygiene Association, syphilis is wide-spread in Russia. In some villages every man, woman and child is infected. In the Parafiew District, consisting of six villages with a population of 9,500, only about five per cent. of the people are not syphilitic. In such cases syphilis ruins the people mentally and physically.

Sixty per cent. of syphilis in Russia is acquired through lack of decent living conditions and a gross ignorance of personal hygiene. The disease has largely lost its characteristics as a sexual disease because it is so generally contracted outside of sexual relations.

How does this affect us? It proves that the people of this country must know the facts—must realize the dangers of infection. Venereal disease sufferers should understand the absolute necessity for scientific treatment—and, above all, appreciate the need for preventing the further spread of syphilis.

It is estimated by authorities that from ten to eighteen per cent. of our population is syphilitic. Many infections are acquired innocently here, as in Russia, but by no means to so large an extent.

The American plan for fighting venereal diseases depends on education—telling the whole pub-